Richard Waybright
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4/1/91

Dear Richard,

It was thoughtful of you and David to think of taking us to dinner for my birthday Saturday. I want it to be a pleasant day we can all enjoy so I write in advance about what might mar it so that it will not be marred.

When I was young I was a reporter. Reporters, and not reporters alone, of course, know the indispensible importance of preserving confidence. I'm sure you know that many have gone to jail rather than violate confidence. Later I was in intelligence where some things also were required to be kept confidential. Lil will, I'm sure, tell you that I never told her a word about any confidential matters. I'm sure she'll remember that once when a young man who had no family came back from an overseas assignment and OSS believed he needed to be with those with whom he could be comfortable and asked us to take him in we did. Actually, he liked living with us so much that after six months we had to ask him to make other arrangements. But we both preserved confidence so much I asked him not a word about what he did overseas, not even the component with which he worked when he lived with us. When he volunteered nothing we both assumed it was because he could not. Moreover, when I left I took not a single piece of paper, much as I would have liked to, and not a single note I had made.

This kind of need is not unknown in police work and I'm certain that people's lives and livelihoods are not infrequently involved.

I do not pretend that there were no papers I'd have liked very much to have kept. I also do not pretend that everybody lived by this well-known code. In fact, in the course of what you by now should be realizing is a lecture, one I should have given you earlier if I didn't, and I think I did, I digress for something that may amuse you and David, where it cost me much to live honorably and enriched someone else who didn't.

My last assignment as a soldier before I was given a medical discharge and rehired as a civilian so that a different component could use a different skill and experience, was to write and illustrate , with only 13 copies, a secret history of OSS intelligence operations. Before long it appeared as a movie starring Jimmy Cagney, with the title, "OSS."

When you were here Saturday I said something was in confidence. I repeated this twice. You violated that confidence. Harry phoned me last night in great excitement. I was, of course, upset by it although it did not keep me from sleeping. I told him I was about to go to bed when he said he'd call back and when he did I was asleep and Lil would not wake me. He phoned again this morning before I returned from my walking and blood-testing. And this time he first hung up and then phoned back.

By now you should know Harry well enough to know it would have at least ~~least~~ have caused him enormous excitement that he would not be able to handle. It has. And it may make trouble for someone else. If not also for me. I have no problem believing you thought you would be helping him but you should have known it would have the opposite effect. It has! His mind works as it always has, he has the same attitudes and beliefs he has had, and he is consumed over Groden at the least. And is so wrapped up in himself and his project he can't see anything else or conceive of anything else or any other interests. I've assured him that he has nothing at all to be a bit concerned about, I've repeated this this way and in other ways, and he can't believe anything except the nonsense he wants to believe. If he keeps on the way he is this morning whatever his project is, and I've asked him nothing about it and he hasn't volunteered anything much about it, he is going to ruin it. Which, I add for you, can be killing the goose that lays golden eggs.

It has also made an additional problem for me. Once there was no excitement I could not handle, but that is no longer true. I had hoped to be able to return to much-interrupted writing this morning but I doubt I'll be able to do it well if at all when I try.

This means much to me and that this stage of my life I don't really have any time to waste or to have wasted for me.

As you know you have had free and unsupervised access to anything you want here. Although I disagree with much of what Harry has done and is probably into in a different form I've still tried to help him as much as I can.

Last time something like this happened - had to tell him I wanted nothing more to do with him and not to come here again. I don't like this, don't want to live this way, but I just can't keep having these kinds of problems with Harry or with anyone else now.

You have not helped Harry, you have hurt him. He will now worry no end over what should cause him no worry at all.

I have trouble enough with my state of mind when I have enough energy to write and you have added to this and now I have to try and forget all of this and return to what was already confused and confusing because of the many interruptions of recent weeks. These kinds of disturbances also have the effect of weakening me further. They take some energy and I have very little.

I don't like not being able to trust people and as you have seen, I begin trusting everyone. I've lived all these years that way and do not want to change.

If I must, then of course I must. If I can't take people at their word then I will not and if people do not preserve confidence then there is no real choice. One just does not put them in a position not to preserve confidence.

I do not know the people with whom Harry is working. He started to give me the corporate name and didn't and it would have meant nothing to me if he had. But if this morning is a fair sample, they will soon not be able to put up with him and that will, from what he said, make new and serious problems for him. Whether or not this can or will make any additional problems or disturbances for me only time will tell but I don't want any more and if I have to see to it that I do all I can to avoid it, I'll do that.

I know you do not have to learn what keeping confidence means. But you do surely have to learn to do it!

Sincerely,

Harry